The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers / L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

CASLT/ACPLS

Core French Teacher from Saskatchewan Recognized with National Language Teacher Association Award

NEWS RELEASE

Monique Myers, a Core French Teacher in Wawota, Saskatchewan, is this year's CASLT H.H. Stern Award Winner. The award recognizes innovation and excellence in second language teaching.

Ottawa, May 29, 2008 – The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) is awarding Core French Teacher Monique Myers its 2008 H.H. Stern award for teaching innovation and excellence. Faced with the challenge of making French learning more concrete for her students, Monique, a teacher at Wawota Parkland School (Wawota, Saskatchewan), inspired her class to establish an action plan to increase the presence of French in the community.

Monique and her students wanted French to become an integral part of their community so that kids would clearly see the benefits of leaning the language. Not an easy task in a small rural farming community where the benefits of learning French are not particularly evident. The action plan put together by this innovative teacher and her students speaks volumes on how a little creativity can put the wheels in motion for positive change.

From presentations made to community leaders, many are starting to see that more French exposure can be beneficial to business and tourism and are looking into creating bilingual brochures, menus, plaques and signs. An on-line pen-pal network is in the works with a class in Paris, France and a summer exchange with a class in Quebec City is being organized. Students have come up with a list of renowned Canadians to invite to Wawota to participate in bilingual activities taking place during the town's centennial celebrations, hopefully attracting attention to the community's transformation. All these efforts are making learning French more tangible for her students. "I wanted my students to have a chance to see that when they reach out to people, things can happen. I wanted to put an end to that 'no one cares what I have to say' attitude by showing them that they can indeed make a difference," says Myers. "If other communities hear about this, hopefully it will plant a seed and they will realize they can do this too," she concluded.

CASLT President John Erskine agrees. "French as a Second Language teachers in communities where there are few pedagogical and cultural resources available often have to be very creative to find ways of making French language learning more authentic for their students. Monique's action plan for increasing the opportunities for her

students to see French reflected in their town is a great example of how teachers are promoting language learning across Canada. We hope teachers of all languages will be inspired by the work being done in this community".

CASLT's H.H. Stern Award is granted each year to support innovative classroom practices in second-language teaching. It is named in memory of Dr. H.H. Stern, a highly respected educator and the visionary initiator of the National Core French Study.

Established in 1970, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) increases awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the importance of second language learning and teaching throughout Canada and promotes the advancement of professional excellence among language educators. See www.caslt.org for more information.

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